

Message Text

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TO SECSTATE WASHDC 3434

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C O N F I D E N T I A L ROME 14241

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, IT, GR

SUBJECT: CARAMANLIS VISIT TO ROME

1. SUMMARY. GREEK PREMIER CONSTANTIN CARAMANLIS PAID A TWO DAY OFFICIAL VISIT TO ROME (SEPTEMBER 29-30) DURING WHICH HE HAD TALKS WITH PRESIDENT LEONE, PRIME MINISTER MORO (HIS OFFICIAL HOST) AND FOREIGN MINISTER RUMOR. THE VISIT IS GENERALLY REGARDED AS HAVING BEEN ROUTINE IN NATURE WITH GREEK MEMBERSHIP IN THE EUROPEAN COMMUNITY AND THE GREEK-TURKISH DISPUTE OVER CYPRUS RECEIVING THE BULK OF ATTENTION DURING THE TWO DAYS OF TALK. PRIOR TO DEPARTING FROM ROME, CARAMANLIS WAS RECEIVED BY POPE PAUL ON OCTOBER 1. END SUMMARY.

2. GREEK PREMIER CONSTANTIN CARAMANLIS SPENT TWO DAYS IN ROME (SEPT. 29-30) ON AN OFFICIAL VISIT AS A GUEST OF ITALIAN PRIME MINISTER MORO. CARAMANLIS, WHO WAS ACCOMPANIED BY FOREIGN MINISTER BITSIOS, ALSO MET WITH PRESIDENT LEONE AND FOREIGN MINISTER RUMOR. LOWER RANKING OFFICIALS OF BOTH GOVERNMENTS HAD PARALLEL TALKS, CONCENTRATED LARGELY ON TECHNICAL ISSUES, WHILE THE PRINCIPLE

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BILATERAL MEETINGS WERE BEING HELD.

3. FOREIGN MINISTRY POLITICAL DIRECTOR PLAJA, IN A MEETING WITH THE DCM, DESCRIBED THE VISIT AS ROUTINE AND ONE WHICH HAD BEEN LONG POSTPONED. (PLAJA NOTED THAT HE HAD NOT ATTENDED THE MORO-CARAMANLIS HEAD-TO-HEAD MEETING AND THUS COULD NOT TOTALLY RULE OUT THE POSSIBILITY OF SOME SURPRISE SUBJECTS HAVING BEEN DISCUSSED). IN THE COURSE OF THE BILATERAL TALKS ON INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS, THE TWO SIDES FOUND THAT THEY HAD LARGE AREAS OF UNDERSTANDING. PRESS REPORTS INDICATE THAT, IN ADDITION TO THE GREEK-TURKISH DISPUTE AND GREEK EC MEMBERSHIP, THE MIDDLE EAST, THE CONVENING OF A BALKAN CONFERENCE, AND NATO WERE ON THE AGENDA.

4. ACCORDING TO PLAJA, THE GREEK-TURKISH DISPUTE OVER CYPRUS RECEIVED A SUBSTANTIAL AMOUNT OF ATTENTION DURING THE BILATERALS. THE GREEKS ARGUED THAT THE ITALIANS SHOULD BE SUBSTANTIALLY MORE FORTHCOMING ON THE ISSUE, AND SUGGESTED LANGUAGE WHICH THE ITALIANS MIGHT USE IN ADDRESSING THE SUBJECT. THE ITALIANS RESISTED THIS PRESSURE, ARGUING THAT THEIR ROOM FOR MANEUVER WAS SUBSTANTIALLY LIMITED IN THEIR PRESENT ROLE AS PRESIDENT OF THE EUROPEAN COMMUNITY. IN AN ASIDE ON THE ROLE OF THE EC-9 IN THE GREEK-TURKISH DISPUTE, PLAJA SAID THAT THE NINE HAS BEEN CAREFUL TO STAY OUT OF THE SUBSTANCE OF THE DISPUTE, HE ADDED THAT SO FAR THE EC IS REMAINING ON THE SIDELINES TO PUT "FRIENDLY PRESSURE" ON THE INVOLVED PARTIES TO WORK OUT THE ISSUES THEMSELVES.

5. REGARDING GREEK MEMBERSHIP IN THE EC, PLAJA SAID THAT THE GREEKS WERE TOLD OF ITALY'S FULL SUPPORT ON THIS ISSUE. HOWEVER, FOR TECHNICAL REASONS, THE ITALIANS BELIEVE THAT THE MEMBERSHIP PROCESS WILL TAKE AT LEAST TWO TO THREE YEARS, SINCE NEITHER THE GREEK NOR THE ITALIAN ECONOMIES ARE READY FOR IT AT THIS STAGE. OTHER MFA REPS NOTED THAT ECONOMIC IMPACT OF GREEK EC MEMBERSHIP, ESPECIALLY AFFECT ON ITALIAN AGRICULTURE, WILL BE MINIMAL BECAUSE OF ALREADY EXISTING RELATIONSHIP PROVIDED FOR IN EC-GREECE ASSOCIATION AGREEMENT.

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6. BEFORE DEPARTING FOR ATHENS OCTOBER 1, CARAMANLIS WAS RECEIVED BY POPE PAUL VI. CARAMANLIS REQUESTED AN AUDIENCE WITH POPE PAUL DESPITE STRONG OPPOSITION FROM THE GREEK ORTHODOX CHURCH. THE LATTER HAS TERMINATED DIALOGUE WITH THE VATICAN BECAUSE THE VATICAN RECENTLY NAMED A NEW EXARCH TO GREEK CATHOLICS OVER ORTHODOX PROTEST. REPORTEDLY THE VATICAN CONVINCED THE GOG, BUT NOT THE GREEK CHURCH, THAT ITS ACTION WAS MOTIVATED BY FEAR THAT EAST EUROPEAN COMMUNIST

COUNTRIES WOULD INSIST ON SIMILAR CONCESSIONS. IN ADDITION,
ACCORDING TO VATICAN SOURCES, CARAMANLIS WANTED TO OBTAIN
THE POPE'S SUPPORT FOR A JUST SETTLEMENT OF THE CYPRUS
DISPUTE.
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